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ADDRESS

ON THE

PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THE UNITED STATES

IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER NATIONS.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FRANKLIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,

ON THE 23TH OF JANUARY, 1847.

By THE HON. A. P. MAURY.

NASHVILLE:

W. F. BANG & CO., PRINTERS, REPUBLICAN BANNER OFFICE.

1847.

ADDRESS

ON THE

PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THE UNITED STATES

IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER NATIONS.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FRANKLIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,

ON THE 28TH OF JANUARY, 1847.

BY THE HON. A. P. MAURY.

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NASHVILLE:

W. F. BANG & CO., PRINTERS, REPUBLICAN BANNER OFFICE.

1847.

FEBRUARY 6th, 1847.

Sir:—The undersigned committee on the part of the Franklin Library Association, and the citizens generally, tender to you their obligations for the very able and interesting address delivered by you before the Association, on the evening of the 28th of January, and request a copy for publication.

We are, sir, most respectfully,

Your friends and fellow-citizens,

J. H. MALLORY,	} <i>Committee.</i>
S. L. GRAHAM,	
JAMES PLUNKET,	
THO. N. FIGUERS,	
J. R. HUNTER.	

Hon. A. P. Maury.



FEBRUARY 8th, 1847.

Gentlemen:—In compliance with the request contained in your note of the 6th inst., I herewith transmit you a copy of the address to which it refers.

Very respectfully, &c.,

Messrs. J. H. Mallory, &c.

A. P. MAURY.

ADDRESS.

When we contemplate the situation and extent of our country, the character of its population and the nature of its institutions, we cannot but felicitate ourselves upon its present advantages, and form the most favorable augury of its future destinies. Situated in the temperate zone, between the 25th and 49th degrees of North latitude, and with a longitudinal extent of fifty-seven degrees, it is blessed with a soil and climate of which the superior, and, I might add, the equal, is not extant upon the globe.—Washed at its eastern and western extremities, by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, fronting Europe on the one shore and Asia on the other, its broad armed ports invitingly expand themselves to the commerce of the world. Inhabited by a people sprung, for the most part, from the noblest race of human beings that has yet existed upon earth; a people speaking a common language, offering up their devotions at the shrine of a common religion, united together by the ties of a common government that was reared by the wisdom and cemented by the blood of a common ancestry, what is there to prevent it from attaining a degree of happiness and prosperity unparalleled in the annals of time? Thinly, even where most densely inhabited, in comparison with the countries of the older hemisphere, it has a vast domain of fertile and unappropriated land, stretching far away into the almost interminable west, over which, for centuries to come, population and free representative institutions, with all their attendant train and progeny of benefits and blessings, may expatiate at large.

In looking to the discovery and first settlement of this country and the circumstances attending them, the mind is forcibly impelled to the conclusion that they were shaped by a special providence to the attainment of special and momentous results. It was sought, in the first instance, as a place of refuge from tyranny, civil and religious. Throughout Christendom, no resting place was found for freedom of thought and of action in temporal or spiritual affairs. Catholic and Protestant Europe vied with each other in the penal severities which they imposed upon non-conformity to their own peculiar tenets of belief. While despotism held its wonted sway in matters of civil polity, the mighty reforms effected by Luther, in religion, seemed likely to dwindle into this, viz: that to the sovereign authority *of the State*, instead of to Popes and Councils, belonged the rightful power of prescribing formulas of religious faith.

It was to fly, then, from this double tyranny over the body and the mind, that the Pilgrim Fathers first sought the shores of America. In their character and principles, we find enveloped the germs of the civil and religious freedom enjoyed by their descendants, "as the rudiments of the plant are wrapped up in the parent seed." A virgin forest stretched, almost illimitably, into the unexplored interior. No axe of civilization had, as yet, been applied to its roots. It was tenanted only by savages and wild beasts, both equally unconscious of the arts, as they would, alike, have disdained the restraints, of agricultural life. Thus situated, no disturbing causes, no time-honored and inveterate abuses, no social frame-work, radically defective in its fundamental principles, existed in the midst of this new community, to fetter the free growth of its youthful limbs. No forms of a vicious or malign civilization were established in its vicinity, to warp it by the influence of power, or infect it with the contagion of example. Far removed from extraneous influences; too distant from other orbs for their powers of attraction to give complexity or perturbation to its motions, this lone western star rose gradually above the horizon and advanced steadily towards the zenith of the political system.

Between the position of the new community and the materials of which it was composed, there thus appears to have existed an harmonious conformity. Of a country so felicitously circumstanced in these regards, history furnishes no previous example. Instances, indeed, there may be, in which nations have aggregated to themselves a vast accession of territory and of population. But uniformly it will be found, that the sword has been the instrument of these accessions; the adhesion to the new order of things, of provinces thus acquired, would be reluctant and enforced. Diversities of race, of language, of religion, of manners, customs and institutions would intervene to prevent the fusion and consolidation of the discordant elements. The fires of insurrection, lighted up by the attempt to mix together materials so repulsive and combustible, would be scarcely extinguished in one direction, ere they would break out in another. And ages of continuous and successful sway, even under the most favorable circumstances of valor and conduct in a long line of able princes, would scarcely suffice to educe order out of the chaos thus occasioned. More frequently, however, the ill-ecemented fabric would be disintegrated by the death of the conqueror, and the sundered provinces revert to their original state of separate existence, or be forced into new combinations by his ambitious lieutenants.

In Europe, the obstacles to the formation of one homogeneous government, such as ours, embracing within its jurisdiction and control, the various nations of which it is composed, are many and insuperable. During the long existence of the feudal system and of the forms of government which grew out of it, that continent was divided into a number of kingdoms of greater or less extent, inhabited by people sprung from different races.

speaking different languages, holding little intercourse with each other and entertaining mutual jealousies and antipathies. These were again subdivided into innumerable petty feudatories, whose chiefs, perched upon their castled craggs, or entrenched within their baronial halls, paid but little regard to the authority of their nominal sovereigns, and claimed to exercise, at will, the right of warring as well upon each other, as with foreign states. Feuds, almost interminable, were the natural tendencies and results of this spirit of insubordination.—And, for ages, the condition of European society was that of which war forms the general rule, and peace the occasional exception. International relationship, for the most part, was limited to the sending of embassies for the negotiation of hollow and short-lived truces, or for the formation of alliances between the weak for protection against the strong. The profession of arms was that which was held in highest esteem, and superior dexterity in the arts of killing, the best passport to public regard and consideration. Travel and traffic, even in the rare and short intervals between hostilities, were alike fettered by vexatious shackles, and by the perils of person and of property which attended adventures in either.

The social and political state of Europe, it is true, has gradually undergone considerable ameliorations. The evils growing out of such minute subdivisions of society, existing not only without concert, but in a state of actual antagonism to each other, became so extreme and insufferable as to operate their own cure. The lesser barons began to look to the king as their only shield of defence against their more powerful fellow-feudatories, and to feel the necessity of strengthening *his* arm in order to make that defence effectual. Hence, for several centuries, there was an evident and general tendency towards the repression of minor fiefdoms and principalities, and the concentration of the powers of the state in the sovereign head. The result was that feudalism, or at least its most anarchical features, was ultimately expelled from the political system, and its subject-vassals, absolved from the evils and incompatible obligations of a divided allegiance, became consolidated into compact monarchies. The increase and diffusion of knowledge consequent on the discovery of printing and the new and more terrible engines of destruction which resulted from the invention of gunpowder, uniting with the moral influences of Christianity, concurred to dispose the minds of nations more favorably towards peace, and a cultivation of the arts of peace. A more liberal system of international intercourse was the fruit of these changes and agencies; and the maxims and principles thereby established were sanctioned by general consent or acquiescence, and gradually incorporated into the code of the law of nations. Commerce and the industrial pursuits which feed it, were subjected to fewer restrictions, and, in process of time even became the objects of systematic encouragement.

But, notwithstanding the improvements which a more enlightened policy has effected in the social and political condition of Europe, there still exist insurmountable obstacles to the fusion of its several parts into one harmonious union. Nor is this position at all incompatible with the fact, already stated, that the kingdoms of which it is composed were themselves the result of a process of consolidation. The elements of *their* population, though rendered discordant by the vitiating tendencies of the feudal system, were comparatively homogeneous; consisting principally of peoples having a common, or at least a kindred origin, speaking the same language, or dialects of the same, and whose vicinity to each other necessitated an intimate union. Most of these kingdoms, it is true, have enlarged their territories by the conquest and incorporation of contiguous provinces; and some of these latter, by a fortunate conjunction of circumstances, concurring with the power and policy of the conquering States, have been made permanent acquisitions. But ages elapse, generations pass away, the traditions and recollections of the past are measurably obliterated, before the inhabitants of provinces thus acquired, become reconciled in mind and feeling to their altered condition. A people thus involuntarily annexed can never be relied on in great emergencies. Look at the conquered provinces of Napoleon, falling off from his dominions, like autumnal leaves, before the blasts and snows which occasioned his irretrievable reverses in Russia. Look at the heroic efforts of the Poles to reconquer their nationality, and to wrest, from the infamous despoilers, the torn and bleeding fragments of their dismembered country. Look at the Austrian possession in Italy, ready to flame up into insurrection, at the falling among them of the least spark of hope that their ancient independence might be recovered. Look at Belgium, married to Holland by the Holy Alliance, but dissolving the bands by force of arms, and exacting, from the imposers of them, a tardy and reluctant recognition of her separate and independent existence. Look at Ireland forcibly annexed, centuries ago, to the crown of England, but so unconquerably averse to the union, that, even now, the readiest passport to the heart and confidence of an Irishman is the magic word "Repeal!"

In the national rivalries, then; in the jealousies and antipathies; in the diversities of race, language, manners and customs which exist between the different kingdoms of Europe, are to be found the obstacles to any permanent amalgamation into one of its present separate and distinct organizations. These obstacles may, and sometimes do, yield to powerful and pressing considerations of mutual interest: such as the security of crowned heads against popular encroachments, and the alliance of the weaker powers to repress the ambition and prevent the aggrandizement of the stronger. But these combinations can never be otherwise than temporary, and are always succeeded and, oftentimes, accompanied, by the breaking out, with renewed violence, of the accustomed feelings of international animosity.

Even as a tree, bent for a time from its wonted posture, resumes it with elasticity on the removal of the inflecting force. Constituted as human nature is, how indeed, could it be otherwise? Inspect the map of Europe, dotted over with the red symbols of innumerable battle fields; where all the evil passions of human nature, roused to intense and infernal activity, have vented themselves through the death-dealing tubes of war! In many portions of that continent, there is not a city, and scarcely a village or hamlet, which has not become historical from having been the theatre of some mighty conflict between contending armies—as Carlyle hath it “of some bloody conjugation of the verb to kill!” Is it possible that these discordant elements will ever blend and harmonize? That these national antipathies, fed by so many recollections of insults and injuries mutually given and inflicted, will ever be permanently displaced by feelings of national prepossession? However desirable it is that such should be the case, the uniform experience of mankind stamps the opposite conclusion with the seal of its authority.

A verification and avouchment of these truths may be found in the facts and developements of contemporary history. The dynasty of Orleans, newly seated on the throne of France, and apprehending from the continental powers an armed intervention unfavorable to its interests, sought with anxiety the alliance of England. To accomplish this object, the diplomatic subtleties of Talleyrand were put in requisition and an *entente cordiale* between these two great and powerful rivals, ostensibly effected. While the danger was imminent and the policy of the measure obvious, it was maintained in the spirit in which it had its origin. An altar of perpetual amity appeared to have been erected, on which the animosities engendered in a thousand years of strife and conflict were offered up, as incense, to the presiding deity. Several times of late, however, has this amicable arrangement been threatened with violent disruption. On either side of the channel, upon every collision of interests, real or supposed, the ancient spirit of international hostility, smouldering rather than extinguished, breaks out in mutual ebullitions of invective and recrimination. And but that Louis Phillippe is the Napoleon of peace; and but that the stability of his dynasty is still, to a great extent involved in its preservation, the chords of amity would have, ere this, been broken in twain. But even Louis Phillippe, consummate politician as he is, and powerfully as he has been enabled to impress his will upon the foreign policy of France, will find it difficult much longer to stifle the voice, now struggling for utterance, of a hatred to which history and tradition furnish such inexhaustible supplies of aliment.

Other instances might be adduced, in proof of the extreme tenuity of the threads which preserve the present pacific relations of Europe. But I will only refer in passing, to the forcible seizure, by Austria, and incorporation

with her territories, of the little Urban republic of Cracow, once the capital of Poland, and, till lately, the only remaining vestige of that ancient and powerful kingdom. In 1815, at the congress of Vienna, its separate and independent existence, under the protection of the three northern powers that surround it, was solemnly guarantied by the allied sovereigns there assembled. Other infractions of that treaty have not been committed without specious or satisfactory grounds to justify or palliate them. As for instance the separation of Belgium from Holland, and the incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw with the Russian Empire. In the first instance it was Belgium, with arms in her hands, that demanded the dissolution of a union which had been imposed on her by force. In the second, an insurrection of the Poles against the authorities which held them in partial subjection to Russia, gave plausible, at least, though insufficient grounds for depriving them of the small remnant of their ancient privileges, which was secured to them by the treaty of Vienna. But for the blotting out of Cracow from the map of nations, no extenuating circumstances can truthfully be urged. For this high-handed act of spoliation and disfranchisement, the governing motive, whatever pretextuous ones may be assigned, can only be referred to the grasping cupidity of territorial acquisition, unscrupulous of the means so that the end can be safely attained. The fact that the Poles, whose ancient capital it was, once rescued Vienna itself from the grasp of the Ottoman, and was the shield of Christendom against the inroads of Mohammedanism, thereby preserving it, perhaps, from forcible conversion to that infidel faith, adds to the infamous transaction, if possible, a still deeper hue of infamy. The protests of France and England against so flagrant an act of injustice, so glaring an infraction of the faith of treaties, to which those powers jointly with Austria the doer, and Russia and Prussia, the abettors of the deed, were parties, evince that a new element of discord has been introduced into the politics of Europe, perplexing the councils of cabinets, and threatening the repose of nations.

To this picture, thus hastily and imperfectly sketched, of the political condition of Europe, how advantageous the contrast presented by the situation and prospects of *our country*! Without much hyperbole, it may be said,

“No pent-up Utica contracts our powers.
But the whole boundless continent is ours!”

eastwardly, westwardly, and, in a great degree, southwardly our territories have no limits but the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the Gulf of Mexico. While northwardly, a magnificent chain of inland seas, in connexion with the noble stream that conveys their surplus waters to the ocean, separate us, to a great extent, from the hyperborean possessions of England on this continent. No nation borders on our territories, possessed of power sufficiently formidable to excite our just apprehensions. No hive of nations,

such as formerly from northeastern Asia, sent out swarms of innumerable barbarians to desolate and lay waste the vast Empire of Rome, and appropriate to themselves its richest provinces, exist any where on this hemisphere, to threaten us with a similar infliction. No incongruous elements, to any disturbing extent, constitute an integral portion of our free population. No vestiges are extant in our midst of a people speaking a different language, which cannot be almost entirely effaced in the course of a few generations. No alien provinces, acquired by the sword, and annexed without the consent of their inhabitants, have, as yet, been forced into the federal union. No recollection of insults given or received, of wrongs inflicted or endured, of fields inearnadined with mutual slaughter, none of those feelings of mingled hate and fear which smoulder in the bosoms of a conquered race living in the midst of their conquerors, embitter the relations of citizen with citizen, or interrupt the intercourse of State with State. No privileges, civil, political or religious, are conferred upon the people of any one portion of our country, that are not equally extended to the citizens of every other portion. No church establishment, converting christianity into an engine of state, and making its ministers the instruments of worldly ambition, prescribes the relations between man and his maker, or imposes restraints upon the free exercise of conscience, the alone vice-gerent of God in the human soul. No navigable stream of any magnitude or importance, flowing to any considerable extent through ours, then passing through a foreign territory, subjects our commerce to the payment of tribute in its transit to the ocean. No vexatious custom-house restrictions or exactions, prevent the free interchange of commodities, the growth and produce of home industry, between the people of the different States or Territories, however widely separated by distance. In short, no country of the same extent, or, indeed of any considerable extent, was ever blessed with a soil so uniformly fertile, or enjoyed avenues of communication, natural and artificial, so admirably adapted to all the purposes of intercourse, internal and external.

From New York to Georgia, at the distance of from eighty to two hundred and fifty miles from the Atlantic, stretches a mighty chain of mountains, now sweeping in graceful curves and, anon, swelling into majestic altitudes, whose cloud-capt summits and fountful sides afford, to the regions below, perennial supplies of the liquid element; which, after having accomplished its first mission of fertilizing the soil, accumulates into noble rivers that bear away to market the manifold productions, in their ripened state, which it had quickened into life, when it first descended in showers, or welled, bubblingly, from the depths of its native fountains. Nor is its action limited to these beneficial agencies; for expanding into ample bays, and eddying into capacious harbors, it provides for the mariner havens of security from storms, and indicates the sites of the marts of commerce. This extensive

region of country, thus amply furnished with all the elements of industrial prosperity, and inhabited by a people astute to discern and prompt to avail themselves of these advantages, has advanced in a ratio of population and wealth unparalleled in the eastern hemisphere, and only exceeded by the great valley of the Mississippi which lies beyond.

This magnificent valley, extending from the forty-eighth degree of north latitude to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Alleghanies on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west, embracing an area exceeding one million and three hundred thousand square miles, comprises within its limits two thirds of the territory of the United States, and about one twenty-eighth part of the terraqueous globe! The majestic river whose name it bears, and whose waters irrigate it throughout, receiving tribute, in countless rivulets, from the two stupendous chains of mountains that form its eastern and western boundaries, furnishes, in connexion with its many large auxiliaries, a length and breadth of navigation unequalled by any other stream known to the annals of geography. Nor are its advantages summed up in the vast extent of its surface, nor in the number and magnitude of its navigable streams, all finding one majestic outlet to the ocean through the mighty father of the floods. In the fertility of its soil, in the salubrity of its climate, and in the value and variety of its productions, nature has been equally lavish of her benefactions upon it. A half century has scarcely elapsed, since its vast solitudes were first startled by the footsteps of approaching civilization.— Within that period, the greater portion of its forests have been felled. Its soil, enriched by the vegetable mould of centuries, has been cultivated with a care that has more than repaid the toil of the husbandman. Its rivers have exchanged the light dance of the Indian canoe for the nobler burden of the steamboat, freighted with the contributions of industry to the commerce of the world. Cities, towns, villages, rural habitations, filled with a busy and cheerful population, have risen up every where upon its broad and teeming surface, and the varied sounds of many-handed labor, from myriad fields and workshops, ascend, in one diapason peal of grateful harmony, to the great giver and dispenser of blessings so inestimable!

The two great divisions of our country whose general outlines I have thus endeavored to portray, though separated by a long range of mountain barriers, have yet been enabled, through the resources of art, to establish intimate relations of internal intercourse with each other. The lofty Alleghany has been compelled to bow his proud head to the spirit of Internal Improvement; to be bound in fetters of cemented rock and iron bars, and ere long, probably, will be subjected to the deeper humiliation of being *ditched*, for the establishment of still more intimate relations between them. Nay, more. A line of magnetic telegraph, connecting together the eastern and western commercial marts, has been laid across his summits; and perhaps, at this moment, a fluid, kindred to that which is forged among his

thundererags, and rivalling it in speed, is passing along it—*has* passed ere one can say 'tis passing—"winged" not "with red lightning and impetuous rage," but with peaceful intelligence of the transactions of governments and the operations of commerce. Other routes of internal communication have been opened or are in progress of being opened, connecting the city of New York with the Lakes and the Lakes with the Mississippi, through several of its tributaries. Also, one through the Carolinas and Georgia to the Tennessee river, which it is hoped will be continued to the Cumberland at Nashville. So that this great mountain barrier to intercourse between the east and the west, which in times past would have been deemed almost insurmountable, may be said, for all the practical purposes of life, to be levelled with the plains.

The portion of our territory bordering on the great northern Lakes, constitutes, likewise, an important feature in the geography of the United States. From the immense basin of which it forms a part, this mighty chain of inland reservoirs, receiving constant accessions from a thousand streams, and, alternately, expanding into seas, and contracting into straits, sends a mass of waters to the ocean whose immensity of volume the earthquake voice of its own stupendous cataract unceasingly proclaims! Independent of the connexion of these inland seas with the ocean, through the St. Lawrence, from the navigation of which we are excluded by the policy of England, the canals and railroads already constructed, or in process of construction, which connect them with the cities of New York and Boston, and with the Ohio, the Illinois and the Wabash rivers, give to the inhabitants of this part of our country the amplest commercial facilities. Another source of its prosperity is to be found in the fertility of its soil, which is peculiarly adapted to the growth of those grains which furnish the staff of life, and for which an unlimited demand is likely to arise in the markets of the world. Though most of this region has been but recently open to settlement, it is rapidly being filled up by an industrious and enterprising population. Rich harvests, the first fruits of its fresh and virgin fields, have already been conveyed to market in quantities almost incredible. Cities and towns have risen up along its extensive shores, like so many exhalations. The busy hum of men ascends from wharves and thoroughfares, where recently naught was heard but the mingled howl and scream of the tenants of the woods and wilds. The wilderness of forest which, but yesterday, covered the sites of these new creations, is being transformed into a wilderness of masts along side of them. Hundreds of vessels, impelled by steam or canvass, may be constantly seen cleaving their liquid way from port to port, richly laden with commodities, the growth and production of every clime.

But there is still another portion of our country, to which I have not as yet adverted. Westward of the rocky mountains, at an average distance of five or six hundred miles from the Pacific Ocean, and extending from the

forty-ninth to the forty-second degrees of north latitude, lies the territory of Oregon; all of it, at least, that now belongs to the United States. Passing events indicate, with a near approach to certainty, that Upper California will be added to our possessions in that quarter. This portion, present and prospective, of our territory is represented to be, for the most part, broken and mountainous, but with many intervening valleys of greater or less fertility. Nor can it boast of but few large outlets to the ocean; and, of these, the navigation of the most considerable is obstructed by shoals and cataracts which form serious obstacles to commercial intercourse. These obstructions, however, are doubtless superable to art, and will give way, in due time, to the onward progress of improvement. But, as if in partial recompense of this disadvantage, the region of country in question is possessed of several bays and harbors, of which, perhaps, the superior is not to be found in either hemisphere. Fitted and, from their local position, apparently designed by nature, to become the receptacles of an immense commerce, it is highly probable that, at no distant day, this purpose will be signally accomplished. It falls within the scope and design of this lecture to state the considerations which lead to this belief.

Europe and Asia, the two most important continents of the old world, are spread over such an immense extent of surface, and the obstructions to direct intercourse between them are of so grave a character, as to preclude the expectation that avenues of intercommunication will ever be opened, affording the requisite facilities for the mutual exchange of their respective commodities. The obstacles presented by lofty mountains and inhospitable deserts might, perhaps, be surmounted, but for the character and condition of the people who inhabit or roam over them; who, differing from the western peoples in race, language, institutions, religion, and degrees of civilization, and, besides, entertaining towards them feelings of aversion and hostility, would probably withhold their consent from any plan of internal improvement that might be devised; or, if their consent could be obtained, their co-operation, in means or labor, could not reasonably be expected. The traffic, then, between the two continents, or at least the most commercial portions of them, being their eastern and western extremes, can only be carried on to advantage, by means of circuitous passages around the southernmost promontories of Africa or America. The extreme length of the voyage by either of these routes, and the perils uniformly encountered in doubling the stormy capes of Horn and of Good Hope, have induced several of the governments of Europe to seek some more direct and less dangerous route. Hence the hitherto fruitless efforts of England to find a passage through the north-west portion of this continent. Hence the projects which, from time to time, have been entertained, of uniting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by means of a canal across the narrow Isthmus that connects the continents of north and south America. For so felicitous is the geographical position of

the new world, that it is central with respect to Europe and Asia, or at least their more important portions, and that a ship-canal between the two oceans would become the highway of that immense commerce, which has not only enriched, but rendered paramount in power, every nation which has heretofore been enabled to appropriate it.

Looking, then, to the geographical position of the United States, central in relation to the two extremes of this vast commerce: looking to the fact that its territories, stretching from ocean to ocean, are inhabited by one common people, and subject to the jurisdiction of one common government; that while the ports on its eastern shores open to the commerce of all the countries bordering on the Atlantic, its western extremity affords harbors, in which the navies of the world might ride in safety, and is separated from the richest countries of Asia, only by an ocean called Pacific from the tranquil character of its waters, it is worthy of grave consideration whether a channel might not be opened across its territories which would become the highway of the commerce of the world. The rocky mountains interpose the only barrier of importance to the consummation of this magnificent scheme. Although the authentic data, which scientific survey can alone furnish, is wanting in regard to the question of its practicability, yet when we reflect that the kindred barrier of the Alleghanies has been surmounted in several places; and that the waters of the Missouri and Columbia, and of the Arkansas and the Colorado of the west have their sources, respectively, in the opposite sides of this mountain, we are encouraged to believe that a communication, by canal or railroad, can be effected; and *that* at a cost trifling in comparison with the great results to be attained. Much light will, doubtless, be thrown upon this subject, when Col. Fremont shall have given to the public the result of his latest explorations in those remote and comparatively unknown regions. Meantime the project of a citizen of New York to connect Lake Michigan with the Pacific by one continuous line of railroad, and its favorable reception in commercial circles at the east, show the sense there entertained of the feasibility of a much more extensive route. When this last barrier of the rocky mountains shall have been surmounted, as, sooner or later it will be, *coute qui coute*, an uninterrupted channel will be opened to the Gulf and Atlantic ports, and the United States will become commercially, as it is geographically, the centre of the globe. San Francisco bay in California, and Puget's sound in Oregon, will be made the receptacles of the teas and silks, the spices and precious stones, of all those eastern luxuries, in short, which have ever been so much the coveted objects of desire among the nations of the west. From thence they will be distributed, in a thousand channels, to every part of the United States, and find their way through New York, or some other Atlantic seaport, to the countries of Christendom.

And while our country at large cannot but receive vast accessions of

wealth and power from the overflowings and deposits of this immense traffic, our territories on the Pacific will advance, in population and improvement, in a ratio corresponding to the growth and development of our other western possessions. Cities, towns and villages will arise within their borders and along their extensive line of seacoast; to which may be added, a rural population. For that region, in addition to its commercial advantages, is destined to become eminently agricultural—the granary, in short, from whence bread-stuffs are to be sent to supply the overstocked and underfed population of eastern Asia with the means of subsistence, and to be exchanged, instead of specie, for the precious commodities in which they abound.

I have said that this trade has enriched and made powerful every nation which has hitherto been able to engross it, or even to participate largely in its benefits. In ancient times, it constituted the main source of the opulence of Tyre and Sidon, whose merchants are mentioned in Holy Writ, as having acquired the revenues and attained to the dignity of princes. And when Alexandria, established by the great Macedonian world-subduer, at one of the mouths of the Nile, was enabled, in consequence of its more eligible situation, to wrest from them the monopoly of this trade, the stream of their prosperity was dried up at its fountain head. Their decline commenced with the establishment and continued with the growth of the latter city. Their palaces, become desolate and untenanted, soon mouldered into dust; and the nets of fishermen, hung out to dry in the sun, fulfilling the prophetic curse, mark to the eye of the modern traveller where once they stood.

Until the discovery of the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, which however circuitous, affords at least an uninterrupted navigation, the cost of the commodities in which this trade consists, was greatly enhanced by the disadvantages under which it was prosecuted. With camels, as the only feasible mode of conveyance, its path lay over arid wastes of sand, beset by tribes of wandering Arabs, whose propensity to pillage could only be restrained by fear, or propitiated by tribute. Hence the delays which were frequently occasioned by the necessity of waiting for the formation of caravans which would be strong enough to overawe these lawless rovers of the desert. Of these caravans, years sometimes intervened between the departure and return. Yet so profitable was the traffic in which they were engaged, that it continued to be prosecuted in defiance of every obstacle; not only enriching the nations that had the enterprise to appropriate it, but, as if by the power of enchantment, causing cities to arise along its desert path.

Nearly midway between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, existed a verdant spot, several miles in extent, shaded by palm trees, and watered by a delicious spring, whose vivifying agencies had probably reclaimed it from the sandy waste. From time immemorial, it had been resorted to by the

the neighboring tribes, as a watering place for themselves and domestic animals. It was truly an oasis of the desert, but unimproved by art, and without habitations other than transient tents; until it was made the stopping place of the caravans, along whose path it lay, in their passage to and fro. From this little spot of verdure—this island of palms set in an ocean of sand—fed more by the flux and reflux of the commercial tide, than by its native fountain, sprung the queenly city of Palmyra, which, rapidly gathering to herself accessions of territory and of power, became, under the auspices of Odenatus and Zenobia, the metropolis of a mighty kingdom; and even placed herself in prond, and for a time, not unsuccessful antagonism with imperial Rome. But compelled, at length, to submit to the all-conquering eagles of that mistress of the world, she gradually declined from her high and palmy state. The final blow to her prosperity was given in the discovery of other routes to the east presenting greater advantages; and “Palmyra, central in the desert, fell.” Leaving no vestiges of her former power and opulence but mouldering walls and broken columns. Her temples and palaces, her baths and porticoes have been all demolished and thrown down. “Her hundred gates have crumbled into ruins and her tombs are but as the dust they were designed to commemorate.” Yet, as if to show the nothingness of man’s works in comparison with those of nature, the little fountain which was the origin of all her fortunes, wells forth, doubtless, as freshly and invitingly as when it first allayed the thirst of its primitive discoverers!

An historical detail of the various revolutions which this trade has undergone would constitute of itself a lengthened treatise. Suffice, for our present purpose, to say that, during the middle ages, Venice and Genoa were indebted to it for the pre-eminence which they enjoyed in power and opulence. That their decline commenced from the period that the genius and enterprise of a Portuguese navigator, discovered the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, and made Portugal, in her turn, its chief recipient and beneficiary. That another route having been discovered around Cape Horn, and the spirit of commercial enterprise been aroused throughout Europe, other nations entered the lists of competition, of which Holland, France and England were the principal and most successful. That these latter, having obtained from the native princes of India, small grants of land, pretextuously as sites for mere trading establishments, made them the nuclei of large acquisitions of territory, afterwards wrested from those princes by arms or diplomacy. That these acquisitions ultimately enured to the benefit of England, in consequence of her naval superiority over France and Holland; and formed the commencement of that colossal empire, every year growing more colossal, which now overshadows the nations in its vicinity, yet existing by its sufferance, but which, perhaps, it is ultimately destined to absorb.

These acquisitions and the consequent advantages which they give to England, have enabled her, for a long period of time, to engross to herself much the larger portion of this trade. A new competitor, however, has recently started up for a participation of its benefits in the United States; whose successful introduction of American manufactures of cotton goods into China has already excited the jealousy of England; compelling her government to relax the rigor of its restrictive system; to admit into her ports, duty-free, bread-stuffs, cotton and the raw materials, generally, which enter into its fabrication, in order to enable her manufacturers, the better to compete with ours in the markets of the east. If we have been able thus to compete with England in those markets, amidst the disadvantages already adverted to, superadded to that of a long, perilous and circuitous navigation, what may we not expect from American enterprise, when the proposed route across our territories shall have been opened? Four months is the common time, and seventy days the shortest possible period, in which a voyage can be performed from Liverpool to the nearest eastern ports. While, from Canton to San Francisco, goods can be conveyed by steam in fifteen or twenty days: and thence inland across the mountains in a like or less period of time. Nay more: by the magic aid of the telegraph, lines of which, if they do not precede, will follow in the wake of the steamboat and the rail-car, a merchant in New York, in fifteen minutes, can convey an order for a supply of goods to his correspondent in San Francisco, and after the lapse of as many days, receive them at the depot of the former city. When these things take place, as take place they will, if the proper spirit be aroused and the proper means be exerted, no efforts on the part of England, none on the part of Europe combined, short of the construction of a ship-canal across the American Isthmus, (which is not likely to be effected soon if ever,) can prevent the ultimate monopoly by the United States of the Asiatic trade; an event which will produce a greater revolution in commercial affairs than any which has taken place since the discovery of America.

Nor will its effects be less important in a moral or political point of view. Since creation's dawn, the tide of emigration has been flowing with a steady current to the west; bearing on its bosom empire, religion, literature, and the arts of civilized life. On reaching the shores of Oregon, it will have accomplished the circle of the habitable globe. Eastern Asia and western America will confront each other from opposite sides of the same mighty ocean! The two forms of civilization in which they have been respectively moulded will be placed in juxtaposition and contrast. The one fixed, stationary, inert and averse from all change. The other active, enterprising, growing and progressive, and imbued with the principles of still further growth and progress. The one bigoted, exclusive, superstitious, idolatrous. The other rational, tolerant, religious, liberal and incorporating with

itself all of useful and ornamental that it may discover or invent. The one feeble, decrepid, paralytic and retaining little of its primitive vitality; the other young, fresh, vigorous, and instinct with the consciousness of energies yet undeveloped. The one, in short, the production of nature's 'prentice hand. The other time's last and noblest offspring.

Such are the elements of the two civilizations which will shortly confront each other from the opposite shores of the Pacific. The consequences of their proximity may be readily foreseen. The enlightened spirit of enterprise which is characteristic of one of them, cannot fail to exercise an important influence on the other. The lines of steam packets which will be established between the two countries, for the mutual interchange of commodities, the growth and manufacture of each, respectively, will give rise to relations of social intercourse similar to those which connect Europe and America. The jealous system of exclusion and personal non-intercourse with foreigners, persisted in, for ages, by the most considerable nations of Asia, but in which a partial breach has been already effected by the arms and policy of England, will yet further relax before the sense of interest and the liberal spirit of the age. The Asiatic people will acquire a yet greater taste for the productions of western skill and industry. The prejudices and antipathies; the narrow and contracted views; the peacock-pride of self-importance, engendered by ages of social isolation and the feeling of superior national antiquity—a feeling by the way not altogether peculiar to Asia—these will all give way in time to the enlightening and liberalizing influences of social and commercial intercourse. These influences, operating on their opinions and manners, first in the large sea-port towns, and more slowly in the interior, will produce gradual and continually progressive changes in Asiatic society: ultimately conforming its structure to the more approved models of the western world.

Such are the tendencies and such will be the effects of establishing with the east intimate relations of Commerce; that great pioneer in the work of social amelioration, without whose previous and preparative agencies even the missionaries of the gospel labor comparatively in vain. Under the providence of God, it is the great agent in civilizing and christianizing the nations, pagan and barbarous, who are susceptible of those regenerating processes; or of replacing them, when incorrigible, with a population sprung from other and nobler races. Within the last half century, an immense expansion and development has been given both to the sphere and intensity of its operations. Exploring expeditions have been fitted out, repeatedly, by the great powers of christendom, to traverse unknown seas; to sail into equatorial and circumpolar latitudes; braving solstitial heats, and equinoctial gales, and floating ice-bergs, for the purpose of finding out more direct and eligible routes between distant and important commercial points; of discovering unknown islands and continents; not to ply them, however, with

the engines of destruction—not, Alexander-like, to bring them in subjection to military sway, but to ascertain and delineate their respective positions; to acquire a knowledge of their productions and capabilities, and to establish with them relations of friendship and intercourse. The distant and almost inaccessible haunts of the whale and of other monsters of the deep that minister to the comforts and luxuries of man, have been surveyed and mapped for the benefit of the hardy mariners who engage in the perilous occupation of the fisheries. The most considerable isles of the Australasian Archipelago, one of them of almost continental dimensions, whose native inhabitants, for the most part, belong physically and mentally, to the lowest grade of savages, have been colonized by England; whose settlements gradually spreading over them, as, under somewhat similar circumstances, over this continent, will carry the Anglo-Saxon laws and institutions into the heart of the southern ocean. Thus forming the nucleus around which civilization will circle and enlarge, until the sister isles of that ocean and even portions of the mighty continent of which they form the appanage, shall be embraced within the sphere of its beneficent influences.

To England and the United States, then—the one operating through her insular and continental possessions in the east, the other by means of the intimate relations of social and commercial intercourse which she will be enabled to establish in consequence of her broad front on the Pacific ocean—to these powers, it would seem, the task has been assigned of infusing new life-blood into the almost extinct vitality of Asiatic institutions. That this momentous revolution will be slow of accomplishment, at least to human perception, and in comparison with the life of man, is most true. So are all the evolutions of the divine policy in terrestrial affairs. Six thousand years have elapsed since mankind was created, and yet vice and ignorance are every where extant upon the earth. Near nineteen centuries have rolled away since the great expiatory sacrifice was made for the sins of the world, yet more than two-thirds of the human race still grovel in the darkness of paganism and idolatry. Yet are we taught to trust that the time is coming and will come when vice and ignorance, when paganism and idolatry will be expelled the earth; when the animal propensities of man will be put under the control of his moral and intellectual faculties; and when a true and genuine religion will encircle the globe in its all-comprehending embrace. The agencies whose present and prospective operations I have been endeavoring to trace, are, perhaps, some of the many complicated means and arrangements of the deity, to effect these mighty changes.

Having thus stated, too much at large I fear, the peculiar advantages of our country in comparison with other nations; its superiority, especially, in the remoteness of its situation; in the freedom and immunity from sinister influences of its early settlements; in the structure of its institutions; in the homogeneity of its population; in the vast extent of its area; in the fertility

of its soil; in the mildness and salubrity of its climate; in the number and variety of the commercial veins and arteries which every where intersect its surface; in the breadth of front which it possesses upon the two most important oceans, opening upon the two most important divisions of the globe: and having urged the expediency in a commercial point of view, and with especial reference to the Asiatic trade, of extending the routes of internal communication already constructed, till they shall have united the Atlantic with the Pacific, allow me to subjoin some brief reflections on the duties and responsibilities which these manifold advantages impose.

A country thus eminently and multifariously endowed, cannot but possess and exercise great power, moral, political and commercial. Already have we advanced with unexampled rapidity to a position in the front rank of nations. It is within our competency to become, at no distant day, *primus inter pares*, the first among equals. No conceivable present limits can be assigned to our capacities of growth and development. One of the peculiar excellencies of our complex system of government is its capability of expansion over an indefinite extent of territory. The ancient and hackneyed objection to republican institutions, that they could only be applied to small communities, has been completely obviated by the happy invention of a system, partly national and partly federative, in which local and municipal affairs are confided to the management of separate State organizations, and those which concern the whole union, whether foreign or domestic, are committed to the jurisdiction of a general government. Under this admirable system, the enterprising spirit of our people, overleaping the obstacles interposed by mountain barriers and desert prairies, has been extending the area of freedom in a geometrical ratio of progression, towards the westernmost verge of this continent. Soon that ultimate limit will have been attained, and all the intermediate country organized into States and included within the pale of the federal union. It becomes us, then, to cultivate those national virtues and qualities which will give happiness and prosperity to the millions on millions of human beings who are destined to occupy its vast domains.

To the attainment of this object, the first and most important requisite—that without which all other means would be ineffective and unavailing, is the continued existence of the federal union. While every attempt, open or covert, to dissolve its ties, or to subvert its fundamental principles and compromises, should meet with prompt frustration and discomfiture, the originators and abettors of such projects should be blasted by the lightning of the public indignation. Immense, indeed, are the issues involved in its preservation! Incalculable the evils of its dismemberment! The angry passions which occasioned so great a catastrophe would become embittered and aggravated by new causes of dissension. Questions of disputed boundary would arise. Internal intercourse would be broken up, or shackled

with vexatious restrictions. Custom-houses with their onerous duties, fortifications manned with garrisons and bristling with cannon, would garnish the frontiers of the newly organized confederacies. The most ruthless of all wars, that between kindred communities once endeared to each other by the ties of friendship, would inevitably ensue, and become complicated with the, if possible, still darker horrors of a *servile* war. Standing armies, cities sacked and pillaged, fields devastated and laid waste, homesteads violated and made red with the blood of their inmates, military license ending in military despotism, these are some of the consequences of a dissolution of the union. On the contrary, if continued as at present organized, and if a right direction be given to its powers and capacities of usefulness, what a prospect will be presented to the view of a not distant futurity! Liberty, regulated by law and restrained only from the license of disorder, embracing within the range of its beneficent rule the entire breadth of a mighty continent! One people, one government, one religion, one destiny! What a theatre for the moral, physical and intellectual development of social and individual man? What a scope will it afford for the prosecution of all the industrial pursuits and for the elevation of the laborer to his proper rank in the scale of humanity! How will the eye and ear of the philanthropist find delightful exercise in the sights and sounds of a smiling, prosperous, happy land! What clearing of forests and ploughing of fields, what verdurous pastures and luxuriant harvests, what bleating of flocks and lowing of herds, what pushing of planes and striking of hammers, what puffing of engines and whirling of spindles, what whizzing of steam-cars and stamping of telegraphs, what wreathings of smoke and whitenings of canvass!—Where can free trade find an ampler or more fitting theatre for testing and developing its cherished theories! In what region of the globe can internal improvement meet with equal scope and verge for the exercise of its powers, or equal means and opportunities of removing obstructions, of leveling inequalities of surface, of annihilating, as it were, both time and space, and uniting a whole people in the indissoluble bonds of social and commercial intercourse!

And while we are thus drawing closer the ties which connect us together as a nation, we should carefully cultivate relations of amity with foreign powers. Peace is emphatically our policy—peace and the arts which it fosters and encourages—peace and the inventions and discoveries to which it gives impulse and development—peace and the ties of international brotherhood which it multiplies and strengthens.—Our mission, I repeat it, is peace. To open the forest; to let in the sun upon the soil, and draw forth its hidden treasures; to rear the work-shop and forge the tools and implements of labor; to restrain, and divert into prescribed channels, the wild energies of the cataract, and make it minister to the manufacture of food and the fabrication of raiment; to remove obstructions to the navigation of

our rivers, and open channels of communication between distant points; to level the path and expedite the speed of the locomotive, with its long sequel of heavily-laden cars; to extend a net-work of magnetic telegraph through the length and breadth of the land and electrify the whole union with one simultaneous shock of intelligence in relation to political and commercial affairs; to open new avenues of trade with foreign countries, erect buoys and beacons, and improve harbors for the safe approach and anchorage of vessels; to provide means and facilities for the education of youth and for the cultivation of man's moral and mental nature, these are the victories of dove-eyed peace! How incalculably more beneficent are such pursuits—how transcendantly superior, in the scale of rational estimation, to the fierce tumults, the demoralizing agencies, the desolating ravages, “the brutal butcheries of vulgar war!”

But we should not limit our efforts to the cultivation of friendly relations with foreign nations. Towards all, but especially towards the weaker powers, our conduct should be characterized by justice, moderation, magnanimity, and forbearance. This is not more the dictate of duty than of true policy. A condition of permanent happiness and prosperity never has been and never will be accorded to a nation that habitually violates the eternal principles of rectitude! War, famine, “the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” empty treasuries, inextinguishable debts, grinding taxes, a thinned and impoverished population, dismembered territories, ultimate national extinction, or dispersion to the four quarters of the globe, these are the scourges and instruments of punishment with which the Almighty visits national transgressions long and obstinately persisted in! Individual crime may, and often does, go to the grave unwhipt of temporal justice! *Its* punishment, however, belongs to the retributions of eternity! But a nation, having no soul, is only answerable in its corporate capacity, for the deeds done in that capacity. Ages may elapse before the avenging bolt be sped; but ages of delay will only increase and intensify its destructive force. If this be true even of monarchies, where the crime of the people is only the negative one of sufferance, how much truer must it be of a republic in which, if wrong be committed, the people, themselves, must be the agents and perpetrators! National responsibility to the Almighty, for national transgressions of his laws! Trace empire in its circling march around the globe, and you will find that every line of its history points to this great focal truth! And if the voice of lost traditions that have failed to reach the ear of history, could now be heard, they would tell of many Troys unsung in verse, of many Sodoms and Gomorrahs unrecorded in prose, of many Siseras against whom “the stars in their courses have fought,” with no inspired writer to predict or narrate their doom!

We have, then, momentous duties to discharge—awful responsibilities to encounter, in the career that lies before us. Into our hands are confided

the destinies of republican institutions. It is here that liberty, an exile and an outcast from the elder hemisphere, has unfurled her banner with its blazonry of stars and stripes, and made the last rally of her forces against the inroads and encroachments of despotism. It is here that she has “garnered up her heart, and where she must either live, or bear no life” on earth! From every quarter of the globe, the eyes of the friends of human rights are turned upon us, in one concentric gaze of mingled anxiety and hope. If we are true to the vocation whereunto we are called; if we shall vindicate the capacity of man for self-government, and the consequent superiority of our institutions over those of other countries, by the greater rapidity of our growth and progress in all the elements of national well-being, and by our superior regard to justice, to the sanctity of contracts and the faith of treaties, we will become a beacon and a land-mark on the cliffs of time, to the nations of the earth—by whose light they may be guided in the reconstruction of their own defective forms of polity. But if we should become corrupt and unprincipled; if passion should dominate over reason; faction be paramount to patriotism; liberty degenerate into licentiousness; if, departing from the principles and compromises of the constitution, we should demolish the fair fabric of our glorious union; if, feeling power and forgetting right, we should follow in the beaten track of aggression and conquest, and delight more in the work of destruction and demolition, than in that of creation and preservation; if forsaking the paths of peace, we should embark on the perilous billows of tempestuous war, no horoscope will be needed to forecast our destinies? Ours and not ours only, but—bound up indissolubly with them—the fortunes of free institutions all the world over, will suffer disastrous shipwreck; and, borne on time’s unebbing tide, will finally be lost in that great ocean of the past, where, already, in numbers numberless,

“The graves of buried empires heave like passing waves.”



